

Mushrush, Grace J.

From: Gurrera, Ronald  
 Sent: Monday, March 04, 2002 2:58 PM  
 To: Mushrush, Grace J.  
 Cc: McCarley, Robert W.; Swett, Chester P.  
 Subject: psychiatry resident issues

Grace,

I'm following up on our discussion earlier today. As I told you then, I was called at 4:30 this morning by the WX MOD who complained that Dr. Badgalyan had been refusing to accept a patient from the WX ER until a series of demands were met. This was a female patient followed at the JP residential program, who presented with suicidal ideation. Dr. Badgalyan insisted that the results of all lab work be known before he would accept the patient, despite the MOD's assessment that the patient was medically stable for transfer. In particular, what the MOD complained about is that he would not accept her verbal report of a negative serum toxic screen, but insisted that she fax the report to him (the computer at WX was down, so he could not directly view the results). After she had complied, she stated "he called back to yell at me because he also wanted a urine tox screen". When I called Dr. Badgalyan, he was (not surprisingly) unable to explain his clinical rationale for demanding a urine toxic screen after the results of the serum screen were known. He then spontaneously reported that he had already instructed the AOD to accept the patient. I suspected that this was not accurate, and when I called the AOD she confirmed that he had only instructed her to accept the patient AFTER speaking with me on the telephone. During my discussion with Dr. Badgalyan he also claimed he was unaware of my previous admonitions to residents about the need to cooperate with VA MODs, especially those in the Boston system. This was surprising to me, as I have made my views very clear on several lengthy e-mails that were distributed to all residents.

Unfortunately, this incident does not appear to represent an isolated lapse of judgment. As I write I am arranging a meeting with nursing staff on 23C concerning a recent incident in which it is alleged that Dr. Badgalyan failed to respond in a timely manner to the need for emergent medication, and refused to consider nurses' advice re: the need for medication. Ultimately, he chose to use olanzapine p.o. in this emergent situation (this patient subsequently broke his 4-point restraints and broke through BOTH seclusion area doors). I am told the patient remained in restraints for several days, and suffered injuries related to excessive agitation while in restraints. I should point out that I have not yet heard Dr. Badgalyan's side of the story, but the facts presented so far indicate the situation was not handled appropriately.

Per your request, I have cc'd this to Dr. McCarley.

